



State of California
Respiratory Care Board
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www.rcb.ca.gov



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Inquiry: Please accept this letter on behalf of my client, who is currently licensed in California as an RN, and is establishing a state licensed rehabilitation facility/Medicare certified comprehensive outpatient rehabilitation facility (CORF). My client is interested in providing respiratory care services in the rehabilitation facility. The following list consists of specific scope of practice questions pertinent to my client's desire to provide respiratory treatment in this facility: (1) What is the difference between a Respiratory Therapist and a Respiratory Technician? (2) Does the Respiratory Care Board certify Respiratory Technicians, as well as Respiratory Therapists? (3) If not, what licensing body in the state of California certifies Respiratory Technicians? (4) What respiratory care practitioner functions can an RN perform? (5) If different than respiratory care practitioner functions, what respiratory technician functions can an RN perform? (6) Can an RN perform respiratory care practitioner functions with solely an RN license? (7) If no, what must an RN do in order to perform these functions? (8) Can an RN perform respiratory technician functions with solely an RN license? (9) If no, what must an RN do in order to perform these functions?

Response: In response to your question regarding the difference between a Respiratory Therapist (therapist) and a Respiratory Technician (technician), please be advised that the RCB issues only one type of license, the "Respiratory Care Practitioner" and does not distinguish between a technician and therapist. In addition, it is the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC) who issues credentials for technicians and therapists. Please be advised that a person must be licensed as a "Respiratory Care Practitioner" in order to practice respiratory care in the State of California. To obtain further clarification of the technician and therapist, please contact the NBRC at:

National Board for Respiratory Care
8310 Nieman Road
Lenexa KS 66214
(913) 599-4200

In response to your inquiry asking if the RCB certifies technicians and therapists, again please be advised that the RCB issues one type of license (Respiratory Care Practitioner) and does not distinguish between the technician and therapist. Please contact the NBRC at the address and phone number listed above for further information.

In response to your inquiries regarding the respiratory care functions a RN can perform, please be advised that Section 3701 of the Business & Professions Code states:

"...It is the intent also to recognize the existence of overlapping functions between physicians and surgeons, registered nurses, physical therapists, respiratory care practitioners, and other licensed health care personnel, and to permit additional sharing of function within organized health care systems...."

The RCB suggests that you contact the Board of Registered Nursing to obtain a copy of their scope of practice for clarification of the functions you described.

The Board of Registered Nursing can be contacted at:

Board of Registered Nursing
400 R Street, Suite 4030
Sacramento CA 95814
(916) 324-2715

Reference # 2001-C-34